

**Alexandria Waterfront Planning Process
Public Forum #1**

April 23, 2009

Presentation of Andrew F. Palmieri

My name is Andrew Palmieri. I am the Chair of the Government Relations Committee for the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, but I am not here this evening in that capacity. I am a Past Chair of the Alexandria Waterfront Committee, but I am not here on its behalf. I am a partner in the Alexandria office of the Vorys Law Firm, but I am not here on behalf of Vorys or a client.

Rather, I am speaking this evening as a 25 year resident of the City of Alexandria. For 13 years, I lived in Alexandria's West End and frequently visited the Waterfront. For the past 12 years, I have had the pleasure of living in close proximity to the Waterfront. I cherish the time that I spend along the Potomac River.

I am keenly interested in the City's opportunity to make the Waterfront more accessible to residents from throughout the City and visitors from around the world.

I wish to make a very simple point: Our Waterfront is like a precious stone, and with the proper cuts and polish, it can become a valuable jewel that can be cherished by all.

If you are here this evening, it is because you are passionate about the Waterfront and the development process. Opinions will vary as to how best to improve the Waterfront and that is to be expected. However, in listening to tonight's presentations, I have heard many common themes that emphasize maritime history, repurposing appropriately historical buildings, providing historical interpretations and education, utilizing public art, performing arts venues, and even bocce courts. These are all wonderful ideas.

In my opinion, the new Waterfront Plan should: (i) create a continuous trail along the Waterfront, (ii) provide varying points of interest and activity along the trail, (iii) beautify existing parks; and (iv) create concentrated "nodes" of commercial activity that create destinations for restaurant, retail, museum, boutique hotel and other commercial activities.

We are presented with a tremendous opportunity to create a world-class Waterfront that offers pastoral vistas and focused commercial activity that will increase the City's tax base from commercial Waterfront uses and the additional business that will be generated throughout the City due to increased visitorship and consumer spending.

There is much commonality among tonight's presentations. As a community, this is an opportunity to rally around those common themes to bring about a lasting improvement that benefits the City for generations.

We have a long planning process ahead, and I look forward to working with my fellow citizens on this important task. Thank you.